

probably will be able to get to final passage tomorrow.

And then, as the majority leader indicated, he and I have had extensive discussions about crafting the various proposals, how many we are going to have on each side to address the most important issue in the country right now, which is the Iraq war, and that debate, of course, will occur next week. So we will continue our discussions toward narrowing down and understanding fully exactly which resolutions, alternate resolutions will need a vote in the context of that debate.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader.

Mr. REID. One final point, Mr. President. We should understand, all of us, that we may have to have a vote or some votes on Monday. Everyone should understand that. And if we have to have votes on Monday, they could occur earlier rather than later. So everyone should understand there may be Monday votes. We hope not. As I told the distinguished Republican leader and as we have announced on a number of occasions, we had our retreat, and the Republicans certainly cooperated with us, and we are going to cooperate with them. These retreats are extremely important to this body. They allow us to enhance the political parties within this great Senate and focus on what is good for the country. We have done that, and the Republicans are going to do that the day after tomorrow, and I think that is important. We will certainly have no votes on Friday.

MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, there will be a period for the transaction of morning business for up to 60 minutes with each Senator permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes with the first half of the time under the control of the minority and the second half of the time under the control of the Senator from Oregon, Mr. WYDEN.

The Senator from Nevada is recognized.

Mr. ENSIGN. Mr. President, I rise this morning to discuss the Iraqi situation. Not the shootings and explosions we see in the streets of Baghdad and in al Anbar Province, but the struggle were currently engaged in right here in the Senate.

This latter battle is arguably more important to our long-term national security than any other issue we face today.

While everyone remembers the tragedy of 9/11, the pain and anguish experienced by Americans that day appears to have faded over time for an ever increasing number of our citizens.

For me, it remains as vivid and as gut wrenching today as it was that September morning more than 5 years ago.

It seems too easy these days to point fingers of blame at one another for our current situation in Iraq.

I could stand here today and recite quote after quote from Members on both sides of the aisle who were certain that Saddam Hussein possessed weapons of mass destruction.

Hussein and his Baathist regime had ruled Iraq as a personal fiefdom for more than 30 years.

There is no arguing that Hussein was personally responsible for the brutal deaths of hundreds of thousands of his own citizens, invaded two of his neighbors, supported worldwide terrorism, and violated 17 separate United Nations resolutions aimed at curtailing his WMD programs.

Seventy-seven Senators voted to give President Bush the authority to act.

With the clear authority from Congress to undertake military operations against Saddam Hussein, President Bush tried long and hard to seek a peaceful resolution. Saddam Hussein could not be reasoned with.

Following 9/11 and in an age of nuclear bombs and other weapons of mass destruction, we could no longer afford to sit by and wait on those wanting to do us harm to land the first punch.

We could not wait until we were attacked before acting. Calls for the President to act in order to protect America were loud and clear. And the President did act.

In doing so, Saddam Hussein's regime was eliminated and some 28 million Iraqis were freed from a living hell on Earth.

Watching the Iraqis struggle since then to establish their own democracy has not been a pretty sight.

With the luxury of hindsight, it's no secret that serious mistakes were made; too few troops; de-baathification of the Iraqi government and; failure of Federal Departments other than Defense to be fully engaged in this effort, to name a few.

We need to face the fact that we are in Iraq. We need to ask ourselves what do we do now.

Do we pack up and leave, even though every voice of reason tells us that Iraq would implode into a terrorist state used by al-Qaida as a launching pad against the "infidels"; reminiscent of Afghanistan under the Taliban?

As Senator McCain has reminded us time and again, Iraq is not Vietnam. When we left South Vietnam, the Viet Cong did not pursue us back to our shores. . .

Al-Qaida is not the Viet Cong. Al-Qaida has sworn to destroy us and is committed to bringing their brand of terror to America.

This fact was evidenced recently during testimony by Lieutenant General Maples, head of the Defense Intelligence Agency.

He testified that documents captured by coalition forces during a raid of a safe house believed to house Iraqi members of al-Qaida 6 months ago revealed al-Qaida was planning terrorist operations in the U.S. Anyone willing to go to Iraq to fight Americans is probably willing to travel to America.

Do we pass meaningless resolutions that mandate unconstitutional caps on the number of troops deployed to Iraq?

I am not a military strategist, so I rely on the opinion of experts to educate me.

General Petraeus, the new commander of the Iraqi Multi-National Coalition and author of the Army's new Counter Insurgency Manual, told me that he could not succeed in providing security for the citizens of Baghdad and al Anbar Province without the additional troops called for in the President's plan.

Do we allow the President the ability to adjust those troop numbers in an effort to bring security to Baghdad and al Anbar Province?

From what I see, the President has the only plan on the table that doesn't ensure defeat. It may not be a perfect plan, and it may need to be adjusted in the near term, but it is certainly a change from what we've been doing so far.

One particular area that I believe needs improvement is our reconstruction effort.

According to the Congressional Research Service the United States has spent over \$35.6 billion on reconstruction efforts.

We have to stop squandering our resources on reconstruction projects in Iraq that fail to deliver basic security and critical infrastructure.

A recent article in the Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding talked of the need to abandon a scattergun approach to reconstruction which focuses on winning hearts and minds and results in many nonessential projects being started but not completed.

I believe that we need to have what the author called a triage approach to reconstruction. The military calls it SWEAT: sewage, water, electricity and trash.

Let's focus on getting these essential services operating at the level they were before we invaded Iraq. This approach will undoubtedly make our military effort easier.

Our efforts to improve fundamental services up to this point have not received the focus and attention they deserve.

We have fallen short in the area of electricity production. Before we invaded Iraq, electric power was 95,600 megawatt hours; now, it is close to 90,000 megawatt hours. The goal was originally 120,000 megawatt hours.

In Baghdad, Iraqis receive about three fewer hours of electricity than before the war. Outside of Baghdad they do receive more, but we know most of the problems are in Baghdad. CRS notes that of 425 projects planned in the electricity sector, only 300 will be completed.

We have done somewhat better in assistance with water and sanitation.

We have provided clean water to 4.6 million more people and sanitation to 5.1 million more than before the war. But besides water, sanitation, and

electricity we know that Iraq needs a functioning oil sector.

Revenues from oil are necessary to fund government services, including security and maintain infrastructure. According to CRS, oil and gas production has remained stagnant and below pre-war levels for some time.

The pre-war level of oil production was 2.5 million barrels per day; it currently stands at 2.0 million barrels per day.

That is far below the 3.0 million barrels per day we were told Iraq was expected to reach by end of 2004. According to the Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction, besides the destruction caused by the insurgents, poor infrastructure, corruption, and difficulty maintaining and operating U.S.-funded projects are challenges faced by the industry.

We are at a pivotal point in this Nation's history.

We face an enemy unlike anything ever witnessed before. We cannot wash our hands of the responsibility incumbent upon us as the leader of the free world.

It is time to join together, forgetting whether we are Republicans, whether we are Democrats, remembering we are Americans. It is time to come together behind our men and women in uniform, figure out what the best strategies are, and move forward together. It used to be said that partisanship stopped at our shore's edge. We need to go back to that spirit of being Americans. We cannot afford to fail in this effort.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Louisiana.

Mr. VITTER. Mr. President, I, too, rise today on the Senate floor to discuss the very serious issue of Iraq and how we move forward there to eventually get our troops home. I have been in the Senate 2 years. Before that, I was in the House for 5 years. That is a relatively short amount of time, but I daresay I believe, as do many of my colleagues who have been here 20 or 30 years, this truly is one of the most important issues we will ever debate and have an impact on. In fact, even for a career that long, it may be the single most important issue we will debate and have an impact on.

I hope all of us take that to heart. Don't say it as a truism but understand what that means and what it demands of us. What it demands of us is that we act responsibly and whatever our feelings and point of view, we put them forward in a responsible way for the good of America.

What do I mean by that? I primarily mean two things. First of all, each of us as Senators has the right to oppose a plan, including the President's plan. I will be the first to say that. I will be the first to defend my colleagues' right to oppose any plan, including the President's plan. But along with that right comes responsibility, and each of us also has a responsibility to be for a plan to move forward in Iraq. It does

not need to be the President's plan, but we sure as heck have a responsibility to be for some coherent plan, in some level of detail. How do we move forward in Iraq for the good of the country, for our security, and for stability in the Middle East?

Second, what being responsible means is taking to the Senate floor to impact policy, to take action but not simply to offer words that have no impact in the real world but only serve to undercut the morale and focus of our troops and to embolden the enemy. Some resolutions, which are mere words—they don't constrain any activity of the President or of our troops—I think have that unintended result. They do not limit troops, they do not limit troop numbers, but they sure as heck destroy morale. They certainly embolden the enemy. Don't believe me about that judgment. Turn to very respected military leaders, including GEN David Petraeus, who said that directly, frankly, in his testimony before Senate committees.

I have been guided by that responsibility, to face the issues squarely, to be responsible, to be for some plan—not necessarily the President's but some real, detailed plan; to take action on the Senate floor and not float words which can have negative consequences for our troops and also embolden the enemy.

After a lot of thought and in that context and after a lot of careful study, including many hearings before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on which I sit, I have decided to support the President's plan as a reasonable attempt to move forward—indeed, as a final attempt to stabilize the situation. But I have also decided to do it in the context of three very strong recommendations which I have made many times directly to the President and to other key advisers, such as Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, such as the President's National Security Adviser, Steve Hadley, and others. Those three strong, clear recommendations are as follows:

No. 1, I do believe, with the Iraq Study Group and others, we need to put even more emphasis on a diplomatic effort and, in my opinion, that should be to encourage and embrace and participate in a regional diplomatic conference that involves all of Iraq's neighbors, including Iran and Syria. This would be very different from direct bilateral talks with either Iran or Syria. With regard to that push, I disagree with that, including, to some extent, the Iraq Study Group. But I do think a regional conference focussed specifically and exclusively on stabilizing Iraq, promoting democracy in Iraq, would be very positive.

No. 2, I agree with many that we can be even stronger, clearer, firmer about benchmarks for the Iraqi Government and consequences if the Iraqi Government does not meet those benchmarks. President Bush has talked a lot about what are clear benchmarks, but I have

encouraged him to go even further, be even more direct and clear, including in public, about those benchmarks. Those would be things such as the Iraqis continuing to take clear, strong action against all who promote violence, whether they are Sunni or Shia or anyone else; things such as an oil revenue law that must be passed in the very near term; things such as major reform of the deBaathification process, which has stirred up enormous sectarian conflict and hatred, particularly from the Shia and Sunnis.

Third, I have been very clear in saying over and over and over that we must constantly reexamine these new troop numbers to make sure they can have a meaningful impact on the ground in the short term. I am for trying this as a final attempt, but I am not for throwing too little too late at the effort.

I respect the judgment of military leaders such as GEN David Petraeus. I take them at their word, and I respect their judgment that this additional 21,500, coupled with redeployment and reemphasis of troops already in theater, is enough, but I think we have to constantly examine that to make sure we don't make the mistake we have made in the past, which is underestimating troop need.

There has been a lot of discussion about the Iraq Study Group report, for good reason. A lot of leading citizens contributed very thoughtful analysis to that report. But I think far too much of that discussion has unfairly portrayed the President's plan and different versions of it, like what I am talking about, as in stark contrast to the Iraq Study Group report. In fact, I don't believe that to be the case at all. It is not exactly the Iraq Study Group report. It is different, but it has enormous areas of overlap.

With regard to political solutions that have to happen lead by Iraqis on the ground in Iraq, there is enormous agreement between what I am supporting, what the President is describing, and the Iraq Study Group report. With regard to a diplomatic initiative, there is enormous overlap between what I am pushing in terms of a regional diplomatic conference involving all of Iraq's neighbors and what the Iraq Study Group discusses. Yes, they seem to favor direct bilateral talks with countries such as Iran and Syria. I do not and the President does not. But there is still enormous overlap and agreement on things we can do very proactively and aggressively on the diplomatic front.

Even on the military component there is great overlap and significant agreement. In that regard I would simply point to one very important passage on page 73 which states clearly, discussing military troop levels and numbers:

We could, however, support a short-term redeployment or surge of American combat forces to stabilize Baghdad or to speed up the training and equipping mission if the U.S.

commander in Iraq determines that such steps would be effective.

Well, of course, the new U.S. commander of Iraq is GEN David Petraeus, and he has suggested and asked for exactly that, which is why it is significant in the President's plan.

So I urge all of my colleagues to give this issue serious thought, to be responsible, to advocate whatever is in their heart and in their mind but to do it responsibly. Support some plan, and do not throw out mere words that have no concrete effect except undermining our troops and emboldening the enemy.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Texas is recognized.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, could you advise me how much time our side has remaining in morning business?

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Ten minutes forty seconds.

Mr. CORNYN. If there is 10 minutes remaining, I would like to take the next 5 minutes and then yield to Senator DEMINT for the remaining 5 minutes, if the Chair would please advise.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

IRAQ

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I appreciate the comments we have heard this morning from the distinguished Senator from Nevada and the distinguished Senator from Louisiana, and I couldn't agree more with the comments they have made. I would like to add some, perhaps, even more eloquent words—and rest assured they are not mine—to this debate because I think it helps us understand in a way that we might not otherwise understand what is at stake and what the people who are most directly impacted believe is at stake in the war on terror, particularly the conflict in Iraq.

I first want to quote the words of Roy Velez. Roy is from Lubbock, TX, and has lost two sons—one in Iraq and one in Afghanistan. Recently, Roy Velez said:

It is not about President Bush. It is not about being a Democrat or a Republican. It is about standing behind a country that we love so much. I know it has cost us a lot in lives, including my two sons, and it has taken a toll on America. But we can't walk away from this war until we're finished.

I don't know anyone who has earned the right to speak so directly to what is at stake, the sacrifices that have been made, and the consequences of our leaving Iraq before it is stabilized and able to govern and defend itself.

Then there is also the story of 2LT Mark J. Daily. Lieutenant Daily was 23 years old from Irvine, CA. He was with the 4th Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division out of Fort Bliss, TX. Lieutenant Daily was killed on January 15 when an improvised explosive device exploded and ripped through his vehicle, taking his life and those of

three fellow soldiers. Mark had been, as so many of our military have done, keeping in touch with his family via e-mail, and he maintained a blog on the popular My Space Web site. In that blog, Mark specifically explained why he joined, and this is what he wrote:

Why I joined: This question has been asked of me so many times in so many different contexts that I thought it would be best if I wrote my reasons for joining the Army on my page for all to see. First, the more accurate question is why I volunteered to go to Iraq. After all, I joined the Army a week after we declared war on Saddam's government with the intention of going to Iraq. Now, after years of training and preparation, I am finally here. Much has changed in the last three years. The criminal Baath regime has been replaced by an insurgency fueled by Iraq's neighbors who hope to partition Iraq for their own ends. This is coupled with the ever-present transnational militant Islamist movement which has seized upon Iraq as the greatest way to kill Americans, along with anyone else who happens to be standing near. What was once a paralyzed state of fear is now the staging area for one of the largest transformations of power and ideology the Middle East has experienced since the collapse of the Ottoman Empire.

I would say in closing that we can't claim to support the troops and not support their mission. If we don't support the mission, we should not pass nonbinding resolutions. We should do everything within our power to stop it. I do believe that we should support that mission. I do believe we should support our troops. That is why I believe we should send them the message that, yes, we believe you can succeed, and it is important to our national security that you do.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from South Carolina is recognized.

Mr. DEMINT. I thank the Senator from Texas, and I would like to add my comments to his. We are certainly discussing probably one of the most deadly serious issues that I have been a part of since being in the Congress. I must start by expressing my respect for the Senators who are proposing this resolution. I know their intent is good. They have heartfelt concerns about what we are doing.

But what I would like to do is remind all of us that our role is a role of being leaders, not just being critics. As elected officials, we know what it is like to have critics second-guess all the decisions we make, but our job as Senators is to be leaders; and to be leaders, we have to make good decisions. If we make good decisions, we have to know what our real choices are. I am afraid those who are proposing this resolution are not considering the real choices because we can keep the status quo, we can withdraw and be defeated, or we can continue until we win and accomplish our goals in Iraq.

This resolution is a resolution of defeat and disgrace. There is no other way it could come out. That is the choice they are making. That is the decision they are making because we

know if we withdraw and leave this to the Iraqis when they are not ready, we will lose all. Not only will we be disgraced as a nation, but we will have probably the biggest catastrophe—human catastrophe as well as political catastrophe—in the Middle East that is going to occur. We have to discuss the real implications of that choice.

I oppose this resolution because it does not support our mission, it does not support success, and it makes the decision for defeat. Real leaders would come up with a plan of action that they follow through on. And whether we agree with the President or not, he has put a plan on the table and he intends to follow through on it with all the advice he can get from his military people. Our role is not just to criticize that, but if we don't agree, it is to come up with another plan, propose it, and our responsibility is to sell it to the American people—not just to criticize, not to come up with resolutions that don't mean anything, intended to embarrass the President. But what it really does is deteriorate the morale of our troops.

I know we are frustrated with this war, and the fear of failure is all around us. But we cannot digress into being critics in this body. Our job is to lead.

I want to conclude this morning with some comments from the soldiers. I know other Senators have called parents who have soldier sons and daughters who have been killed. I have not had one who told me to get out of Iraq. I have had a lot of them tell me: Win. That is how to honor the sacrifice is to win.

SPC Peter Manna:

If they don't think we're doing a good job, everything we have done here is all in vain.

We have a number of these, but I don't have time to read them all.

SGT Manuel Sahagun said:

One thing I don't like is when people back home say they support the troops but they don't support the war. If they're going to support us, support us all the way.

Americans are not against this war; they are against losing. They need to know we can win it.

General Petraeus, the best general that we have, whom we have just approved, confirmed in the Senate, has told us that we can succeed with the President's plan. This is our last best hope to leave Iraq as a free democracy and to help stabilize the Middle East. The other choice is defeat and disgrace.

Mr. President, I call on all of my Senate colleagues not to support this resolution and to act as leaders: to put forward a plan or support the one that the President has put forward.

I yield the floor and reserve the remainder of the time.

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, parliamentary inquiry: I believe I have time reserved at this point. I was going to speak for a little over 20 minutes or so. I would like to inquire through the Chair of my colleagues if they wish to finish their remarks before I go to mine.